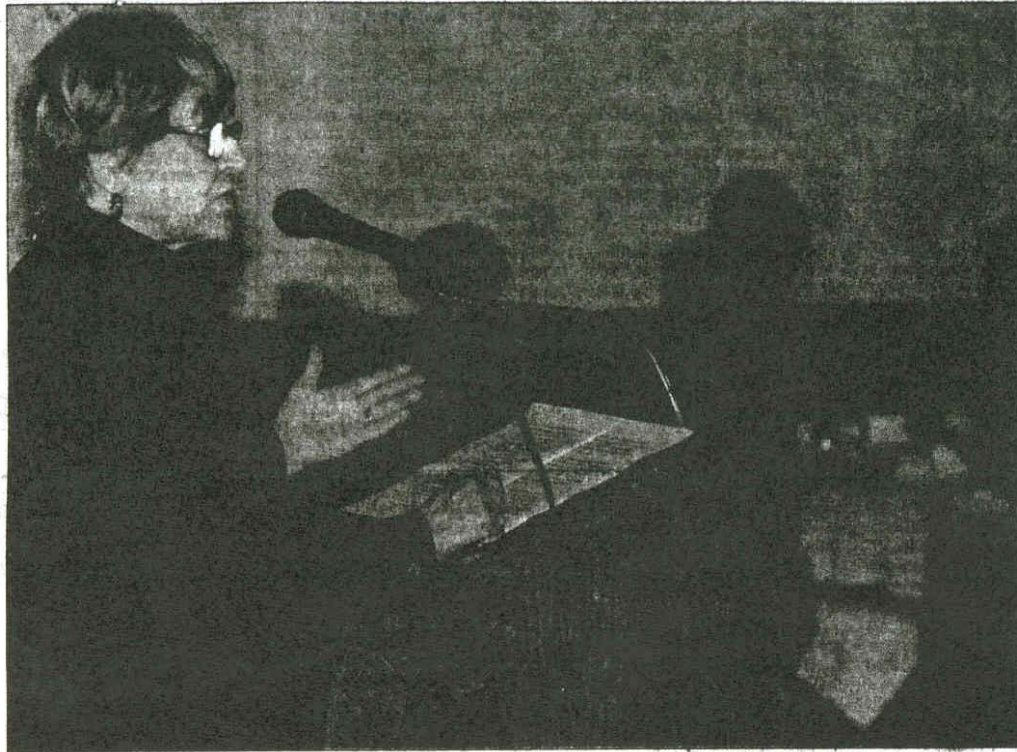


Congresswoman speaks out



Dan Cappellazzo/Niagara Gazette

U.S. Rep. Louise Slaughter speaks to members of the Woman's Issue Network at a question-and-answer luncheon Thursday at the Como Restaurant. She urged participation in this year's election.

Slaughter urges women to consider upcoming election

By Jill Terreri
Niagara Gazette

U.S. Congresswoman Louise Slaughter urged Niagara County women to pay attention to what is happening in Washington and to think seriously about the nation's future when they go to the polls in November during an address Thursday.

Stressing this election's importance, Slaughter, D-Fairport, said the scariest time in the nation's history that she could recall was during former President Richard Nixon's impeachment hearings, but even then, there was no discussion of amending the Constitution and crucial court appointments were not on the line.

"All of us know that all the issues are women's issues."

Louise Slaughter
U.S. Congresswoman

"We do not have either of those assurances now," she said.

Speaking to a gathering of women at the Como Restaurant, sponsored by the Niagara County Commission on the Status of Women, Slaughter delivered an address on how women's issues are being handled in Washington and took questions from the audience.

Slaughter, who represents

Rochester, Buffalo and Niagara Falls, warned that non-profits, many of which are important to women, have faced serious cutbacks under President Bush.

She said there is a movement under way to galvanize women in Congress to work together to preserve funding for those programs.

"All of us know that all the issues are women's issues," she said.

Women in Congress have called upon Bush to make sure the federal budget will not hurt women, she said, and spoke against cuts in child care assistance funding.

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8A—Niagara Gazette, Friday, April 16, 2004

Train station money given

Continued from page 1A

"We have to support more women," she said. "Once women are self-sufficient they go on the tax rolls."

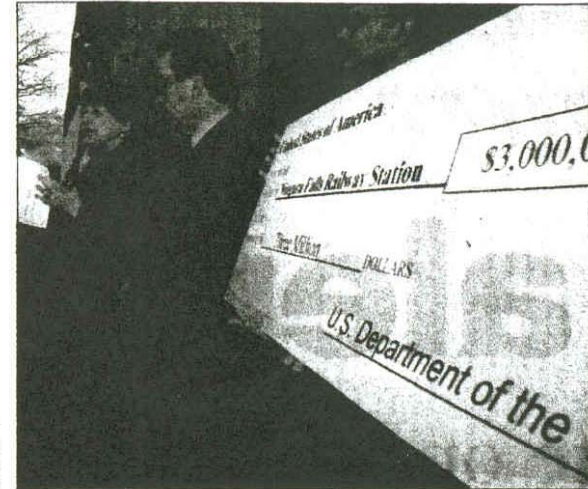
Kathleen Whalen Granchelli, a member of the Commission on the Status of Women and former candidate for Niagara County Legislature, asked Slaughter for advice on electing more women to office.

Out of 19 county lawmakers, two are women.

Slaughter told them not to lose heart, saying she ran three times before she was elected to office. She said she rallied the support of other women, because she knew at the time she was running, men were not going to vote for her. She said women who enter the political arena must have something that drives them to do it and recommended the lifestyle holding public office brings, because it allows her to leave a legacy.

"I have got the best job that exists, I think," she said.

Angela Berti, vice president of government affairs at the Niagara USA Chamber, asked about the chances of the Ni-



Dan Cappellazzo/Niagara Gazette

U.S. Rep. Louise Slaughter announces a \$3 million federal fund slated for the new train station with Niagara Falls Mayor Vincent Anello in front of City Hall on Thursday afternoon.

gara Falls Air Base being shut down, and Slaughter said the fact that there are shared services on the base help its chances of surviving the next round of base closings.

The congresswoman also addressed sexual assault against women in the military by their male counterparts and domestic violence, as well as the struggles single women have in supporting families in the current job market.

She lamented the fact that America's largest employer is Wal-Mart.

"These are minimum wage, no benefit jobs," she said, adding that Wal-Mart had been cited for locking its employees in stores until their work is done.

"You don't believe these things are happening in America, but they are," she said.

Slaughter said she is also disturbed because the Bush Administration does not have an economic policy that will help low-wage earners, but is committed to spending \$1 billion per week in Iraq. She also doubts that in light of all the violence and attacks on U.S. troops, other nations will be quick to step in and share the burden.

"It's us. We are going to be doing it."

Before the luncheon, the congresswoman presented a \$3 million check to Niagara Falls Mayor Vince Anello for construction of a train station at the old customs house on Main Street.

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